

The Washington State Part C System Improvement Project  
Stakeholder Meeting  
April 2010

**General System Areas Needing Improvement -- Emerging Themes**

Over the course of two days, participants in this stakeholder meeting were asked to provide feedback to the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers (ESIT) program in various ways. Their reflection on current practices in early intervention across the state, state structures, and system components yielded a wealth of information to inform the Washington System Improvement Project's activities. This document is a summary of the recurring themes that emerged throughout the activities and represents the collective feedback of the participants in attendance.

**Policies, Procedures, and Common Forms:** In general, participants felt the need for a strong relationship with ESIT through the communication of consistent and clearly stated policies, procedures, and definitions and the creation of common forms, and through regular contact and interaction with ESIT staff. There is a sense from stakeholders that the leadership of ESIT is a strong, positive presence that is already creating more cohesiveness across the state. Specific suggestions for improvement included:

- Review and update existing Part C policy and procedure manual
- Develop guidance for consistent implementation of policies and procedures and Part C regulations
- Align policies, when feasible, across various initiatives
- Create state procedural safeguard forms that are available for use by all programs
- Create consistent definitions and terms to be used across the state
- Create guidance documents to ensure consistent application of service practices (i.e., use of procedural safeguards, Individualized Family Service Plan (IFSP) development, teaming, informed clinical opinion, natural environment justifications)
- Create accountability systems to ensure consistent implementation

**Funding:** The funding structures for Part C are complex, variable and insufficient to support consistent implementation of services across the state. On the other hand, the number of funding sources available creates opportunity for coverage of early intervention services if they can be streamlined and structured for consistent application across the state. Participants' suggestions included:

- Create alignment between medical model funding sources (insurance, Medicaid) and family-centered, strength-based IFSPs and services in natural environments
- Include untapped or difficult to access funding streams
- Create equity in access to funding

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*Questions or comments about the content of this document may be directed to Kathy Grant-Davis, Program Consultant at the Early Support for Infants and Toddlers program, at [kathryn.grant-davis@del.wa.gov](mailto:kathryn.grant-davis@del.wa.gov).*

- Simplify access to funding, including education dollars
- Increase state funding for early intervention services
- Create equity in family experience (co-pay costs, impact on insurance caps, etc.) by locale
- Create a system that pays for collaboration, teaming and travel time

**Improved Clarity around Roles and Responsibilities:** Participants indicated that there is a desire to implement teaming in early intervention across the state. Given ESIT's move to DEL and the numbers of agencies and providers involved in the early intervention system, there is a need to streamline and define the roles and responsibilities to ensure that families are receiving quality services and that all compliance guidelines are met. The following is a summary of the areas needing clarity as suggested by the participants of the meeting:

- ITEIP/ESIT/DEL – aligning policies and procedures, creating guidance for all re: Part C services, eligibility criteria, etc.
- LLAs – reviewing number, roles and functions of LLAs and making modifications as appropriate
- FRCs – providing guidance through practice guides, training and technical assistance
- Service Providers – providing guidance for the consistent implementation of effective practices across the state and developing a shared philosophy with FRCs to promote effective teaming
- Families/Parents – talking with families and explaining Part C services in a way that supports their participation and involvement

**Guidance for the Implementation of Practice:** Participants expressed a strong willingness to implement system improvements with the support of guidance documents. Documented guidance was requested in the following content areas:

- How to talk with families about early intervention and the different steps (creating a common language to communicate who we are and what we do)
- Evaluation, Assessment, and Eligibility
  - Distinguishing between the purposes of evaluation and assessment
  - Moving toward more functional/authentic assessment of children and families for the purpose of developing functional and meaningful IFSP outcomes and determining progress in the three child outcomes areas
  - Using Informed Clinical Opinion in evaluation and assessment
  - Gathering information from families on routines and using this information throughout IFSP development and service delivery
- IFSP and Outcome Development
  - Integrating evaluation, assessment and eligibility
  - Integrating families' concerns, resources and priorities
  - Integrating Child Outcomes

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- Writing functional, routines-based and collaborative IFSP outcomes
- Using IDEA compliant language (e.g., natural environments justification, etc.)
- Effective Teaming
  - Incorporating throughout service delivery (coaching and primary service provider approaches)
  - Working across disciplines and agencies (i.e., FRC's and Service Providers)
  - Working with families
    - Developing and implementing family centered practices
    - Communicating effectively with families
    - Empowering parents as team members
    - Developing cultural competence to work with families from various backgrounds, including those with multiple risks (ESL, child welfare involvement, etc.)

**Working with the public schools:** The school districts' involvement in Part C services vary across the state. Collaboration is a key component to ESIT's ability to implement state improvements. Recommendations were to:

- Assess Part C/Part B similarities and differences, collaboration and transitions
- Create a streamlined, consistent funding and payment processes
- Establish a consistent mechanism for ESIT/DEL/OSPI interagency collaboration

**Training and Technical Assistance:** Systematic dissemination of information with training and technical assistance to promote implementation of policies and procedures is needed.

Recommendations included:

- Create training and dissemination plan for online training modules
- Implement online training modules
- Provide consistent access to training across the state
- Establish statewide competencies
- Provide follow-up technical assistance to ensure the transfer of knowledge gained from training to actual practice.

**Program Monitoring:** Participants stated that the key to implementing change is having directions in writing *and* creating accountability procedures. The need for a monitoring system that is focused on compliance as well as the outcomes of early intervention for children and families was articulated. Methods to move towards this type of system included:

- Providing systematic dissemination of information with training and technical assistance to promote implementation of policies and procedures
- Sharing training opportunities
- Improving the feedback loop/learning from our data, through an improved data management system and guidelines for consistent data collection and data entry
- Creating a statewide communication plan

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